

EXHIBIT 3

Updates re: Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking:
Video Visitation

Video visitation editorials and news articles

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

It's a bad idea to limit jail inmate visits to video



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❶ The concept, considered in Dallas County, is just another way to prey on inmates.

Dallas County came very close last week to making a huge mistake that would have put a major burden on county jail inmates and their families.

What sounded initially like a great technological advancement, promising more convenience for "visiting" family members and greater security within jail facilities, really proved to be a money-making scheme on the backs of inmates.

County officials had bought into a plan to provide video visitations, by which those wanting to see and talk to prisoners could do so from their homes or kiosks placed around the county. There would be a cost of 50 cents a minute (or \$10 for a 20-minute visit).

Five companies had submitted bids on the original request for proposals, according to *The Dallas Morning News*. A North Texas firm, Securus Technologies, was selected.

The company sold the plan as a way of eliminating the "burdensome tasks" of moving inmates, servicing long lines of visitors and manually managing visitation schedules — thus increasing "focus on the safety and security of inmates, your officers and the public you serve."

Of course, such a system provided the ultimate incentive for a county by allowing it to cut expenses and create another revenue stream. The county could receive up to 25 percent of the money generated through video visitations.

County commissioners were set to vote on the 29-page contract Tuesday, but a few days before the regular meeting officials discovered that the contract called for the elimination of *in-person* visits, something inmate advocacy groups vehemently opposed.

So did Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, who also objected because the plan was too costly for inmates. He didn't think the county should be making money "off the backs of families."

"Securus Technologies would have the Dallas County Commissioner's Court believe that their video visitation scheme is a panacea for many of the woes that plague the Dallas County Jail during visiting hours," said Michael W. Jewell, president of Texas CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants). "But inmate/inmate family support organizations like Texas CURE, TI-FA (Texas Inmate Families Association) and Texas Voices know better. Video visitation opens a Pandora's Box of woes for inmates and their families."

Jewell went on to cite the cost per visit as well the First Amendment right to freedom of expression "because Big Brother has the visit monitored."

He said, "Criminal defendants could not openly discuss the particulars of their cases with attorneys in fear that what they say might be shared with the D.A.'s office."

Jewell makes an excellent point when he says, "If in-person, face-to-face visits are eliminated, the poor and computer illiterate would be excluded and stranded on the sidelines, unable to maintain family ties."

Jenkins was able to convince the other members of the commissioners court to remove the contract from the agenda. But the staff was asked to seek a new contract — one that does not eliminate in-person visits — and open the bidding to the original five companies that offered proposals, the *Morning News* reported.

Inmate advocacy groups warn that the issue is not going away, as more county jails, including the one in Maricopa County, Ariz., are signing on to video visitation and doing away with in-person visits. The companies providing the service can't make as much money if families still have the option to come to the jail.

I don't like the idea at all.

Frankly, there are already too many industries taking advantage of inmates and their families, everything from overpriced commissary goods to incredibly expensive collect phone calls.

We don't need any more of these great, and expensive, ideas that prey on those who can least afford it.

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Star-Telegram

Fort Worth, Texas

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2014

Star-Telegram.com

